

# EXHIBIT 12

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# As the coronavirus pandemic grows, gun sales are surging in many states



David Stone closes a sale with a customer at Dong's Guns, Ammo and Reloading in Tulsa, Okla. (Ian Maule / For The Times)

By KURTIS LEE, ANITA CHABRIA

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TULSA, Okla. — David Stone snagged a cardboard box of .223-caliber ammunition from the shelf and slid it across the glass countertop, offering his go-to sales pitch: “Welcome to the biggest selection of ammunition in all of Oklahoma.”

“I’m not sure I can keep on saying that,” Stone said, explaining that the supply of goods at Dong’s Guns, Ammo and Reloading has been seriously depleted over the last few days.





Boxes of ammo sit on shelves at Dong's Guns, Ammo and Reloading in Tulsa, Okla. (Ian Maule / For The Times)

“When I say sales have been booming,” he said, “it’s an understatement.”

Gun sales are surging in many U.S. states, especially in those hit hardest by the [coronavirus](#) — California, New York and Washington. But there’s also been an uptick in less-affected areas, with some first-time gun buyers fearing an unraveling of the social

order and some gun owners worried that the government might use its emergency powers to restrict gun purchases.

Stone's packed store shares a small strip of road with a church, a cemetery and another gun shop, and in recent days he has sold several firearms to truckers traveling along Interstate 44 here in Oklahoma. One trucker, who was headed to Arizona, bought \$2,500 worth of firearms and ammunition, and another trucker, who was headed to Illinois, dropped \$200 on ammunition alone.

"You got to be protected for all sorts of stuff," Stone said. "Seems like the world has gone mad."



A line at the Martin B. Retting gun store in Culver City on Sunday extends out the door and around the corner. (Francine Orr / Los Angeles Times)

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[In California](#), would-be customers formed a long line outside the Martin B. Retting gun shop in Culver City over the weekend.

“Politicians and anti-gun people have been telling us for the longest time that we don’t need guns,” said John Gore, 39, part of the crush of customers in recent days. “But right now, a lot of people are truly scared, and they can make that decision themselves.”

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[Ammo.com](#), an online retailer of ammunition, has also seen a recent increase in sales. According to the company, from Feb. 23 to March 4, transactions increased 68% compared with the 11 days before Feb. 23, a day when Italy reported a major outbreak of the coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

Some gun control groups [have raised concerns about children](#) out of school for the next several weeks, which could result in more children and teens being killed in homes with unsecured guns.

“The unintended consequence of these panic-induced purchases in response to the COVID-19 pandemic could be a tragic increase of preventable gun deaths for the loved ones these individuals are trying to protect,” Kris Brown, president of the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, said in a statement Monday.

The National Rifle Assn. and other 2nd Amendment advocates have been applauding the uptick in firearms sales. “You don’t need it, till you need it,” Donald Trump Jr. tweeted recently.



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According to various [reports](#), the surge in gun sales started several weeks ago in states such as Washington and California, and included large numbers of Asian Americans, some fearful of [anti-Asian backlash over the coronavirus](#).



At Laguna Guns & Accessories in Elk Grove, south of Sacramento, the shop's owner said he has seen a recent run on his inventory, with many Asian customers stopping into the store, but others too. Over the last week in Elk Grove, an [elderly woman died of COVID-19](#) in a senior care facility, and the area's school district — one of the largest in California — was one of the state's earliest to close.

"It's panic," said George, the shop owner, who would consent to the use of only his first name.

For weeks, customers have been crowding into [Arcadia Firearm and Safety](#), a gun store in the heart of Southern California's Chinese American community. The store's owner, David Liu, said it was the busiest he'd ever seen, and not just because of his Asian American clientele.



A customer looks at parts for his turkey gun while shopping at Dong's Guns, Ammo and Reloading in Tulsa, Okla. (Ian Maule / For The Times)



“It’s everybody,” said Liu, adding that his major suppliers are out of stock, making it impossible to reorder. “It’s not only California, it’s the whole nation that’s cleaned out. ... It’s like toilet paper.”

Three minutes before the store’s closing Sunday, first-time gun purchaser Anna Carreras was one of the remaining customers, waiting to see what inventory was left.

“It’s not like an active panic, more a preoccupation with making sure everyone is adequately prepared, myself and family and friends,” she said. “Better to be prepared and not need it than need it and not have it.”

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In Tulsa on a recent afternoon, the click of magazines jamming inside handguns reverberated off the cinder-block walls of Dong’s Guns. Dozens of people — many of whom seemed utterly unfazed by warnings to stay home and practice social distancing — filtered in and out of the shop.

When approached by a reporter, one man refused to answer questions if he couldn’t first get a handshake. Nearby, another man walked the aisles in search of a scope for his bolt-action rifle.

Brandon Jay, 37, said his interest in the gun shop had nothing to do with the coronavirus. He was here to protect himself from a neighbor who has made threats.

“It’s the flu 2.0,” he said, shaking his head. “People all scared of this — it’s the flu. It’s some made-up stuff from the coasts.”

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With seven confirmed cases of the coronavirus and no deaths, Oklahoma — unlike California or Washington — hasn't experienced the hour-by-hour updates of the pandemic's spread. Though Jay is skeptical of the risks, he said he was encouraged to see more people buying guns.

"If this hysteria is helping the cause, then that's great," he said. "Strap up."

Less than a mile down a two-lane road from Dong's, Bryan Pratt grabbed an AR-15 pistol from the back of his pickup truck in the parking lot of 2A Shooting Center. Pratt, who likes to shoot his firearm for sport most weekends, said the parking lot was unusually packed.

"There's no sports games on," he said, "so I guess people want to shoot."



.45-caliber guns sit in a display case at Dong's Guns, Ammo and Reloading in Tulsa, Okla. (Ian Maule / For The Times)

Pratt said he wasn't yet worried about the virus — maybe when there are more cases in the area, he said.

"I'm not there yet," he said, gripping his gun case and jogging inside.

He had reserved a lane for an hour and didn't want to waste time.

*Lee reported from Tulsa, Okla., and Chabria from Sacramento. Times staff writer Louis Sahagun in Los Angeles contributed to this report.*

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Kurtis Lee is a national correspondent for the Los Angeles Times, who frequently reports on the nation's debate over guns, marijuana legalization and how Trump administration policies are affecting states. He's filed reports from the unrest in Ferguson, Mo., chronicled Donald Trump's rise to the presidency and explored issues surrounding voter ID laws. Prior to joining The Times in August 2014, Lee worked at



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